

A machine to make a . . . **Million-Dollar Smile**



A new MRI, for free? Your vote could help Montana win one

When you get mail that offers a chance to get a new million-dollar piece of medical equipment for nothing, chances are good that it's a scam.

Which is exactly what Chester's Liberty Medical Center CEO Ron Gleason thought when he read his mail one day last fall.

"I saw it and thought, 'Oh, sure,'" Gleason said. "Then my wife came into the office and saw the letter. She read it and said, 'This is real. We can do this.'"

In fact, the highly respected Siemens Medical Solutions company was making a bona fide offer of a free million-dollar magnetic Resonance Imaging machine to any deserving hospital that earns the most votes for a two-minute video telling why it deserves the MRI. An MRI is used to make highly detailed images of soft tissue, organs and bones.

Faced with a high-tech problem involving high-tech equipment, Gleason and his staff did what any reasonable adult would do — he took the problem to a group of kids.

The Chester-Joplin-Inverness High School computer applications class jumped all over the problem under the guidance of teacher Amy Sangwin. The handful of students settled on the theme of barn-raising, a community effort to help each other's lot by working together to do what no single person could do alone, which is pretty much what cooperatives are built on.

That very theme is being used to market the voting campaign to the rest of the state as well, according to Tracey Nordstrom-Hansen, marketing director at the medical center. "We want people to think of the competition as Win an MRI for Montana," she said.

The students, all seniors, produced the video in only a week, and the medical center staff decided to wait until the last minute for submission, Nov. 30, so they could be assured of being the only entry from Montana and hang their marketing strategy on the theme of winning an MRI for Montana, Gleason said.

It won't be easy. Just shy of 100 medical facilities have entered the competition. "We're up against some communities of 80,000 or more," Gleason said. According to one recent tally, Sumter Regional Hospital in Americus, Ga., has garnered more than 200,000 votes.

Still, Chester's video hangs in there in 16th place, although at 13,000 votes, it has a long way to go to close the gap. It doesn't hurt that a niece of Gov. Brian Schweitzer attends the CJI school, and he's being urged into the campaign. And the project has received statewide coverage. Still, it won't matter if Montana folks and supporters from out of state don't get to a computer to vote — you can vote more than once, but only once a day from the same computer. "Vote early and often," said Nordstrom-Hansen.

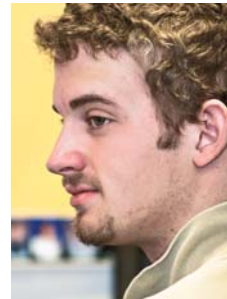
The video features original music donated by noted Montana musician Philip Aaberg and footage shot by student Tyler Good with the help of Chase Pimley of Joplin. The voice of the production and on-screen talent is Callan McKinley. Heidi Hansen edited the production, and Burmaa Negui, an exchange student from Ulaanbaatar City, Mongolia, whose photo appears on the contents page, researched to find the sound track.

Good said, "We enjoyed the challenge of producing a video. I like to learn new things."

Visit www.winanmri.com. View the video. Vote.

Help put a million-dollar smile on Montana

Go online to www.winanmri.com, view the "MRI for Chester, Montana" video and vote to win an MRI for Montana — do it today, because voting closes Dec. 31.



Tyler Good



Heidi Hansen



Callan McKinley



Chase Pimley